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Curios and Relics

Vehicles

Train

Pullman Berth Used by Lincoln

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Lincoln Berth, Old Relic Here in Town

Prized Possession of Miss May
Barry in Her Walnut
Street Home

Miss May Barry, of West Walnut street, is the owner of one of the original Pullman sleeping berths used on the Pennsylvania Railroad in the days when Lincoln was a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and in connection with which there remains to this day an anecdote of interest.

This very unusual piece of restful furniture, the last of its day and generation, came into the Barry home in this way. Many years ago, Rev. D. R. P. Barry, a direct descendant of Commodore Barry, of Revolutionary fame, was pastor of the Fourth Street Lutheran Church, Altoona, and among his parishioners was one, C. C. Mason, for fifty years head of the upholstering department of the Pennsylvania Railroad Car Shops. This was in the days when Andrew Carnegie was "handy Andy" and messenger boy around the place, and a man by the name of Pullman was trying out an idea for the comfort of the passengers traveling by night.

In the Barry home reposes the fruit of his endeavors in the form of the first Pullman berth. It was upholstered by C. C. Mason, who at 84 years of age died in the Barry home, then at Hartleton, where they had removed from Altoona. Mason brought to the Barry home, as his bed, this berth, and there he not only slept for many years, but eventually died.

The berth, when not in use as a bed, folds up much like the berths now in use on sleepers today, with the exception of the back upholstering, which was a later development in the art of traveling comforts. It is upholstered in the original dark red velour, which is in excellent preservation, and not only adds much to the attractive furnishings of the Barry home, but serves as an ideal extra bed as well.

Carl Sandburg, in his Abraham Lincoln, refers to Lincoln and sleepers, as follows:

"He (Lincoln) rode from Chicago to Springfield in a car conducted by a man named Pullman, who was experimenting and trying to find out whether the public cared to sleep while traveling, and, if so, what sort of accommodations they liked. Lincoln paid Pullman fifty cents for half a berth, hung his coat and vest on a peg, kicked off his boots, and, as Pullman told it, 'was asleep like a healthy baby before the car left the depot.'

"Soon, however, a passenger who had paid fifty cents for the other part of the berth Lincoln was sleeping in, came to Pullman in a huff, spluttering: 'There's a man in that berth of mine and he's about ten feet high. How am I going to sleep there? Go and look at him.'

Pullman, in a huff, went to look, and, as he told it, found 'the tall, lanky man's knees under his chin, his arms outstretched across the bed, and his feet stored comfortably.'

"He shook the tall man awake and told him he would have to pay a dollar for the whole berth. 'My dear sir,' answered the tall man, 'a contract is a contract. I have paid you fifty cents for half of the berth, and, as you see, I am occupying it. There's the other half.'

"He pointed to a strip about six inches wide. 'Sell that and don't disturb me again.' And Lincoln went to sleep. Later Pullman and Lincoln were introduced and enjoyed a laugh over their first meeting."

SELINGSGROVE PA TMS
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1931.

Pullman Berth

Owens Pullman Berth Occupied By Lincoln

BY UNITED PRESS

SELINGSGROVE, Pa.,—A Pullman car berth, in which President Lincoln was said to have slept, is a prized possession of Miss May Barry here.

The berth was removed from one of the early Pullman cars by C. C. Mason, for 50 years head of the upholstery department of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Altoona.

Mason made his home with the Barry family at Altoona and used the berth as a bed for many years.

It is covered with dark red velvet, excellently preserved. The berth, when not in use, folds up like the berths now used on sleeping cars.

Miss Barry is a daughter of the Rev. D. R. P. Barry, former Lutheran minister and a direct descendant of Commodore John Barry, first leader of the United States Navy, according to family records.

EASTLAND, TEX., TELEGRAM
MAR. 5, 1931 M17

Pennsylvanian Owns Pullman Berth That Lincoln Occupied

SELINGSGROVE, Pa., Mar. 7.—(UP)—A Pullman car berth, in which President Lincoln was said to have slept, is a prized possession of Miss Mav Barry here.

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Curio

CONSOLIDATED
PRESS CLIPPING
BUREAU
CHICAGO, U.S.A.
431 SO. DEARBORN ST.
MAIN OFFICE

HUNTINGDON, PA. NEWS
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 1931.

3-3-31

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You can't insult a flanner by

PULLMAN BERTH of Lincoln Preserved

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Kansas City, Mo. Journal
MAR. 8, 1931 M13

RELATED INTERESTS

7 Styles of Sleep

By comparisons we measure our progress. In things mathematical we compare this year with last year, five years ago, fifty years ago. Individually, we know the degree of our attainments by turning backward the leaves in our scrap-book of experience.

Recently the Alton Railroad looked back at yellow pages in its scrap-book. The date on one page was 1859. From two Alton day coaches a sleeping car—No. 9—had been built—the 1st in Am. Its initial run was from Bloomington to Chicago.

No. 9 was 44 feet long, built of wood, candle-lighted. Its seats and beds were without springs. The most luxurious traveling vehicle of the day! Abraham Lincoln often used this train.

The Alton was, therefore, the first railroad to use sleeping car service.

In 7 years (as the Civil War was ending) came the Pioneer—longer, wider, higher, upholstered. Blankets and sheets were among its luxuries!

In the scrap-book, a page is still wet with paste—the latest contribution to the historical story of progress. It pictures the Alton's Midnight Special—de luxe. All steel. Spacious. Well-ventilated. Artistically decorated. Exquisitely appointed. Radio. Valet. Buffet-club. All night dining service. Non-stop between Chicago and St. Louis. And 7 types of sleeping accommodations!

Honest Abe had no choice. The marvel of a coach in which he could stretch his great length in repose was enough. Picture his confusion today, were he buying a ticket, confronted with the necessity of choosing 1 of 7 styles of sleeping comfort!

Private section is the newest wrinkle. Seats slightly narrower, thus allowing (within the curtained space) a communicating passage to and from private dress-

ing room and toilet. It combines privacy, convenience and moderate cost. The feature is exclusive with the Alton between St. Louis and Chicago.

Interesting to anyone—these 3 pages: first the famous No. 9;

words? Other members of the Alton fleet are denominated Lincoln Limited, Fast Mail, The Hummer, The Nighthawk.

Compare the blunt and appalling "Twenty Pay Life," the very ordinary "Ordinary." Where is



All-night dining service is available in the Buffet Club.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN OFTEN USED THIS TRAIN"

then the Pioneer; now the Midnight Special. Shades of a beloved President!

And while we are on the general subject, let the INDEX point out (it is the purpose of any good index to point out) that for many years railroads, having sounded the depth and extent of human reaction, have carefully chosen words to fire the imagination. Is it an inherent right, vouchsafed to common carriers, to make exclusive use of picturesque phraseology, persuasive nomenclature? Why has insurance painted its lofty business with such drab terms?

A thing which, in matter of fact, is a pounding, snorting, whistling avalanche of steel and steam, cleaving the blackness of night on a road-bed ballasted with stone, flanked by wires and poles, worked upon by day-laborers with picks and shovels—this thing, to the public, is the glorious Midnight Special. Who can doubt the appeal in those two

there a railroad which has named its de luxe train "Extra Fare and Tip Special," its regular train "Ordinary Day Coacher"? Whatever sales psychology is, or may be, insurance cannot be accused of using it in policy names.

Actuaries are fine and necessary men, but why not let the supt of agencies name the policies?

Charlevoix Legion Now Owns Sofa Used by Lincoln

Charlevoix—A sofa used by Abraham Lincoln when traveling on railway trains is the prized possession of the Leslie Shapton post, American Legion, of this city.

The martyred president, who was 6 feet 4 inches in height, was too tall to sleep comfortably in the Pullman berths of that period. So the Chicago & Alton railroad built a special sofa for Lincoln.

The frame is of heavy carved oak upholstered in deep red plush and still is in good condition. For many years the sofa remained in an old Pullman car in the railroad yards. When employes started to wreck the car the yardmaster drew the attention of James Charlton, traffic manager of the road, to the sofa.

Charlton took it from the Pullman and shipped it to his summer home here. Members of the family later turned it over to the local legion post.

Don & Family Pres
2/2/41

Pulman 26 1/2 x 12 1/2

**LEGION HAS SOFA USED
BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

**Relic Was Presented Local Post by
Summer Resident Family**

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Clara & Mary Cooper
2/26/41



